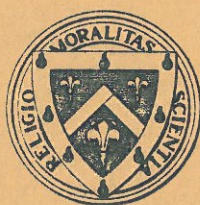


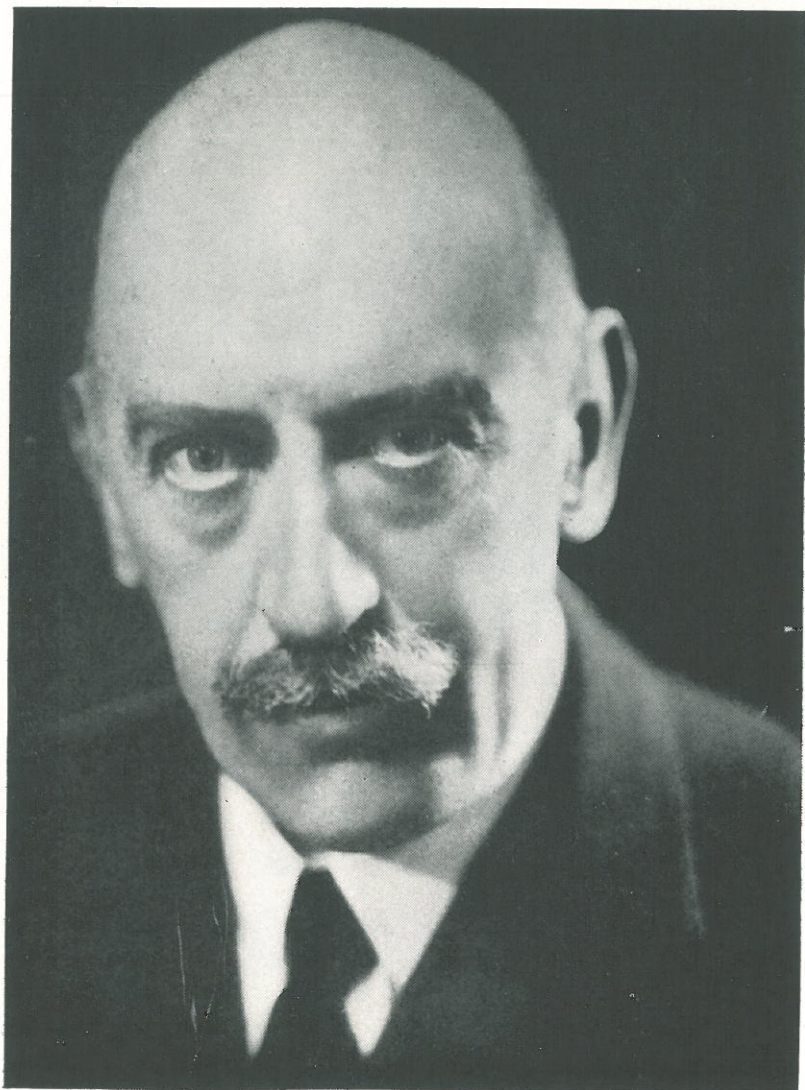
Vol 8
#2

MEASURE



SPRING - SUMMER

1946



Maurice Baring

"Acme Photo"

MEASURE



SPRING - SUMMER
1946

SAINT JOSEPH'S of INDIANA
A College For Men
Collegeville, Indiana

MEASURE

(All-Catholic Rating, 1944-1945)

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Volume VIII

1945 — 1946

Number 2

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Author of Culture

JAMES BENDER

At the Royal Academy in London there is a painting by the artist H. James Gunn. Its subject is a group of three. Mighty Chesterton, with the pose of a leader, pours his energy into a line of ink. Belloc, his aggressive features bespeaking a fierce lurking energy, watches alertly. Observant in the background stands the third—aloof and thoughtful in an easy pose. This is Maurice Baring. After Chesterton's death the other two continued to write.

A second shadow fell across the painting December 14, 1945. This time the figure of Mr. Baring faded into death. And it was only death that could take him out of the famed triumvirate. He had fought with Chesterton and Belloc for their common Mother, especially since the eve of Candlemas Day, 1909. On that day, after ten years of struggle and uncertainty, he embraced Mother Church—"the only action of my life," he declares, "which I am quite certain I have never regretted." The gifted son can best prove his worth through his own works.

"If no one else has called Maurice Baring the divine amateur, I will. Every kind of writing comes naturally to him, and he stamps them all with his own distinction." Thus E. V. Lucas hails Baring in his *Reading, Writing, and Remembering*. Mr. Baring's works do, indeed, include essays, critiques, anthologies, travels, poems, plays, and especially novels. His literary activity is as broad as his worldly experience.

Mr. Baring's amazing versatility grew out of an extensive and varied background. He left Eton College at seventeen to study languages in Germany and Italy. He returned to England to attend Trinity College at Cambridge for a year; then he went abroad to continue studies in languages. In 1898, at twenty-four, he passed His Majesty's Diplomatic Service examination, and the following year was appointed attaché to the British Embassy in Paris. He was transferred to Copenhagen in 1900, to Rome in 1902, and the following year back to the Foreign Office in London. Baring decided to take up journalism in 1904. Having gone to Russia and learned the language of that country, he covered Russia as newspaper correspondent for three years. He was then sent to Turkey. 1912 found

him on a trip around the world, and back as correspondent to cover the Balkan War. Forty years of age when the Great War blackened 1914, Baring was given a commission in the Intelligence Corps. He later transferred to the Flying Corps, in which he remained till the end of the war. After the armistice, he settled down to mold Baring the scholar of languages, the diplomat, the journalist, the traveller, and the soldier into Maurice Baring the author.

Command over such a wealth of experience and knowledge equips Baring with confidence and poise in his writing. He is the most placid of men. Keen and cool, he remains ever unruffled and fluent. Practically all the world has been his environment, so that he reviews it with an easy glance. His memories of it he presents realistically, but without bitterness and with unfailing beauty.

Parallel with his complete placidness is Baring's lightness of touch. Behind the multiplicity of unlabored thought ranges an alertness and gaiety. Sly and generous humor lurks behind his observations. A note of mischievousness is natural to Baring, especially in his essays and reminiscences. He likes the little twist, the joyous hint that winks into the offended face of common sense. A partly hidden cleverness enlivens all the lines, subtly covered in his lightest moods with a brilliance of wit. In Baring's veins lively and sunny magic somewhere dances, urging on his love of wholesome nonsense. We start an essay perhaps—and we must go on with this irresistible, wonderfully teasing leader, who has intrigued us with his originality and freshness.

Baring's youthful spirit fits his mind with a keen edge of insight, with a delicate and true grasping power. He is the observer who is infinitely sensitive to every connotation alive in his subject. With the insight of a poet he interprets and sets down in fitting words every shade of import. He catches the mood and the situation by striking straight at the keystone.

Especially is his intuitive sense poignant for grasping and appreciating the cultural things of life. He delights in the exquisite, the lively, and the beautiful. Acting, music, singing, writing—he is familiar with them all. Sometimes he emphasizes his appreciation of music and beauty through the characters of his novels. It is Baring talking when Christopher Trevenen muses somewhat sadly: “. . . but if I were a composer, I feel I could express more things in music

than one can in words." Or, in *Punch and Judy*, Baring's exquisite ear, led into the "cloud-cuckoo-land of Gilbert's invention," finds delight in Sullivan's clothing of "tripping syllables with a most delicate vesture of melody, in which a fairy-like pizzicato accompaniment falls on the thread of tune, like dewdrops on gossamer."

Maurice Baring is never really intimate. He has, as he says of Euphemia Dene in *Tinker's Leave*, a "vague, detached fascination that nobody can account for." Any stirrings in his heart strangely clothe themselves in remoteness ere they pass from his pen. Baring is an aristocrat. A melting down would evoke sentimentalism of condescension rather than the natural warmth of a writer more extrovert. He speaks from his intellect to your intellect, winks from his wit to your wit. Arousing of your emotions by Baring is due to the recognizing by your intellect of the sad situation rather than to phrases fanning the heart. For any fire of his is veiled. The heat of passion seeks in vain to burn through the coolness of his graceful style. But a remote restraint in the face of sorrow may lightly etch pain till our emotions spring up:

"Christopher was allowed to see Mabel once more after she was dead. She was lying on her bed, covered with flowers . . . Mabel looked as if asleep, more beautiful than she had ever looked . . . But Christopher was frightened at the sight, nor did he feel inclined either to cry or to say a single prayer as he was told to do. His Mabel was not there. She had gone away for ever, and to some place he could not reach, far beyond any thought . . . 'What would they do if they knew that I had killed Mabel?' For Christopher was convinced that it was the bathing in the river that killed his sister, and this thought pursued him like a dreadful demon, and gnawed at his heart; but nothing in the world would have made him reveal his secret burden, nothing except perhaps sympathy and that alas! was not forthcoming."

There is the quiet, inevitable conquest of pathos. In this very aloofness, Baring reaches our own distant emotions by a calm, measured perfection, and a melodious touch.

Precision and energy stimulate his remoteness. With keen-edged gusto he pricks the aesthetics of the eighties thus:

“ . . . greenery-yallery, Grosvenor-gallery, foot-in-the-grave, hollow-cheeked, long-necked, and long-haired brood of devotees of blue china and peacocks’ feathers and sunflowers—the imitators, the hangers-on, and the parasites of a group of real artists and innovators.”

Punch and suggestion are in such lines. At times—for instance, when Christopher Trevensen falls surely and rapidly into love—the rhythm swings into an intense, swift-moving tempo. But always, Baring has perfect control of the flow of thought or action as he sits in easy poise somewhere in remoteness behind the essay or novel.

Mr. Baring has acquired a most luminous style in his aloof, measured way. His sentences are laconic and full of clean-cut meaning. A natural grace, flowing through the short and thoughtful sentences, mold them into a limpid whole of definiteness and clarity. A typical lucid paragraph from Baring might read thus:

“Elsa was the same age as Alex. She was fresh and pretty, with a snub nose and pale blue eyes, and fair hair. She was not a beauty, but she reminded you of a white rose.”

You feel, too, the exquisite rhythm that is inseparable from the music of a style perfect in detailed limpidness.

This precision of style flows from Mr. Baring’s well-trained mind. Exacting logic dominates all his thought and even the actions of his characters. He is a man of clear and keen distinctions, as is evidenced from such a passage as this:

“On the other hand, there is no reason why one should dogmatise as to how a particular poem should be written. One should accept the poem as it is. Nearly half of modern criticism consists of saying that a wine-glass ought to have been a bottle, whereas the point is, if a wine-glass is a wine-glass, what sort of wine-glass it is. Therefore it is absurd to say that Mr. Chesterton’s ballad ought to have been different, that it ought to have been more like ‘The Ancient Mariner’ or ‘The Border Ballads.’ The point is that it is ‘The Ballad of the White Horse,’ written by G. K. Chesterton, and written as no

one else could have written it. The wise reader will read it, re-read it, remember it, and be thankful."

In Baring's impersonal but winning touch there is no hint of radicalism, no shadow of extremes. Every phrase is proper in its significance. His judgments are cool, broad, delicately discerning. And he makes his gift of discretion irresistible by earnestness, and humble, unassailable sincerity.

Maurice Baring is master among the ways of culture and among the common, enlivened details that make up culture. Each simple thing he touches blossoms into most perfect exquisiteness. His works are a flower garden of delicate, detailed workmanship—the closer you view them, the more you are delighted. The profusion of grandeur of loftier talent is not his—nor does he try to claim it. His realm is among simple things, and on them he spends all his talent. On this very account his work is captivating; it knows no straining or pretentiousness. There is a certain verity and naturalness and humble strength about it.

Baring has attained mastery over the commonplace by infusing his own lively personality into it. His wide experience and alert imagination ever furnish a charming mass of material that is cleverly expressed through his limitless vocabulary. Sly and poignant arrangement of details effect a light and gracious touch, which sometimes approaches the brilliant. What an irresistible humor the following paragraph evinces, though carved from a most common store:

"While I was at Mukden I had an interview with the Chinese Viceroy, and one day I was invited to luncheon at the Chinese Foreign Office. The meal was semi-European. It began with tea. Large uncut green tea leaves floated in delicate cups; and over the cup and in it a second cup put upside down made a cover. There followed about seventeen courses of meat entrees, delicately cooked. I thought I would give one of the courses a miss, and refused a dish. The meal immediately ceased. The plan was evidently to go on feeding your guests till they had enough, and then to stop."

Straight, strong narrative is foreign to Baring's pen. He rather suggests his way along. Keywords of significance and connotation unconsciously hint of further wealth yet uncovered in the writer's

mind, and suggest yet broader coloring in the subject. His suggestive words are like unobstrusive telescope eyepieces, through which, when we bend down and look, we see the scene enhanced a thousand times more than if we had looked through the plain window glass of objective matter-of-factness. What a pointed picture in a few words of suggestion is this!—"a marvelous and poisoned camel perishing in its pride."

In his description of characters, too, Baring strikes swiftly the secret spring of revelation: "Countess Linsky was an old lady with shrewd eyes and an infectious laugh." Christopher Trevenen is summed up as "a natural supporter of all lost causes and impossible loyalties." Our intuition and sense of recognition is thus invited to continual exercise and pleasure.

Thus this third of the literary triumvirate has his own gentle method of conquering. What he loves he does not fight for but cultivates. He attracts by his keenness and kindliness; he keeps us delighted by a light and gracious touch that knows not the least trace of labor. And while he holds us with his charm, he nonchalantly drops effective digs at us erring. His little twists of observations, wit, satire are clothed gently and cleverly; yet we see them, and they are all the more effective in that we seem to find them privately and independently, instead of having them thrown at us accusingly. Perhaps Baring's own phrases catch best the spirit of his attack. What he says of the tunes of Sullivan fit his own graceful lines:

"... the daintiness, the elegance, the finish, the workmanship, the beautiful business-like quality of the work, its ease and distinction, its infinite variety . . ."

Or again, what he admires in Mr. Gosse's work gives personality to his own:

"... the same sensibillite [as in *Father and Son*], the same gift of delicate portraiture, the same lightness of touch, the same rippling undercurrent of inimitable humor."

Baring's gentle, tenacious conquest is by the spaciousness and charm of his gifts. He proves himself, as he once quoted with delight the saying of a little boy, a gentleman "who loves God very much and has beautiful manners."

Rural Culture

EDWIN G. KAISER, C.P.P.S., S.T.D.

For the sake of clearness I think it well to begin with a definition of our terms and a statement of the purpose of this paper: What do we mean by rural culture? And why do we present this subject at this rural life gathering?

Miss Eva Ross in her *Fundamental Sociology* gives a descriptive definition of the term culture which should serve to make the matter clear: "The accumulation of material, social, and spiritual things, habits and ideas, which are the expression of man yet outside himself . . . culture means all the social institutions, customs, and ways of living which are peculiar to any group; and all the manifestations of the social habits of a community." (p. 59) In this sense we may speak of our Western culture, our Eastern culture, of American or European culture, or urban or rural culture.

E. B. Taylor says that culture is a "complex whole which includes belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as member of society."

More concretely and more to our purpose is the following from Dr. Carl Taylor in "Restoration of Rural Culture:" "Culture is a cluster of things that hang together with a comparatively high degree of unity. This unity is a living thing, the component parts of which are the physical products which the environment yields, the tools and implements used by the people, their habits and techniques of work and play, their forms of human association, their beliefs, theories, valuation and philosophies about their own life and work." (p. 83, *Catholic Rural Objectives*.)

Applying these definitions to our subject, we should say that rural culture is this cumulation of material, social, and spiritual things, habits and ideas as found in the rural group as opposed to the urban group. It is obvious that it must be studied not in isolation of part and part but as a whole, and indeed in the historic setting and development.

In this study we are concerned primarily with our own American rural culture, and the purpose of the study is an understanding of the historic background of our rural life presented with the hope

that it can be restored and filled with a Catholic spirit. Unto this end the Catholic Rural Life gatherings and discussions can contribute mightily. I share the conviction of many that the salvation of our democracy lies in great measure in the restoration and revitalization of the best in American rural culture; and that the salvation of the Church in America, also in great measure, lies in the building up of a strong and abiding Catholic American rural life.

Until comparatively recent times the American life was predominantly rural and agricultural. The riches of the soil, the nature of our colonization and the force of circumstance conspired benevolently to this end. Many leaders in our early public life were planters, tillers of the soil. Mount Vernon and Monticello are not merely patriotic shrines; they are symbols of the rural culture which was ours from colonial times. The letters of Washington and Jefferson reveal not only a deep interest in but also a considerable understanding of the science of farming. And they are not lacking in warnings of the perils which existed even in those days to the rural economy.

To these evils we shall refer later. Despite their presence there existed from early times a true rural American culture. For long its influence was predominant in our national economic and social life, and even today its influence is potent, despite all changes in our mode of life and thought.

It was characterized first of all by self-sufficient farming, in which those who tilled the soil owned it. Each farm or at least each neighborhood was nearly economically self-sufficient. In the rural towns some citizens might own a plot of land and a cow or two together with some pigs and chickens. The rest were supplied from the farms nearby with milk, vegetables, and fruits. From this neighborhood came the supplies for the local butcher, the miller, and the baker.

The farmer got from the land all his food except some few fruits, spices and condiments. Grain, vegetables, berries and other fruits came from his own soil and in abundance for the whole family. From the soil too came the feeds for his stock and poultry, and these in turn made their contribution to its fertility. For the family the cows furnished milk, butter, cheese; the hogs furnished lard, bacon, ham; the poultry provided eggs and meat; the bees supplied honey. Fishing, trapping, hunting were sports and means of increasing and varying the food supply.

Before wells and pumps there was the spring house with clear flowing water for drinking and cooking and the cooling pools in which the pans of milk and butter withstood the summer heat. "The spring-house was one of the points of a farmer's pride," says Mark Sullivan, (*Our Times*, vol. 2.). "On hot summer days he frankly exulted in its coolness, liked to enjoy and display to others the physical luxury of it, believed and boasted that its water was colder than that of any neighbor."

Food was stored and preserved in the cellar—and many farms in the north had their own icehouse where ice cut from creeks and pools in winter and covered with sawdust was kept for the summer. Often apples and other fruits and vegetables were buried through the winter, and every kind of fruit or berry was canned or dried and stored away. "Meat and fish were dried and salted or pickled in brine."

I hope I may be pardoned for quoting the following rather nostalgic passage from Mark Sullivan (*Our Times*, *ibid*, page 490-91): "A more glamorous method of preserving food, especially fruits was the old-time housewife's art of making jellies and preserves, a technique inherited as the accumulated lore of generations. Knowing nothing of the science of chemistry, she knew perfectly the art of cooking to just the point where, if she stopped there, the product would achieve the desired condition of preservation—what was expressed by the verb, to jell. Security against infection by dirt from outside was achieved by a scum that hardened on the top, and by a cover of unbleached yellow muslin tied tightly around the top with a string. About the 1860's came a patented vessel, still called, in deference to the ancient traditions, a fruit-jar, thought it was not earthenware but glass, accompanied by a circular strip of rubber to put between jar and cover and insure more perfect sealing; a type widely used was Mason's. It sent the old time earthen jar and crock into cellars and attics, from which forty or fifty years later, about 1920, they began to come back, now in the dignified, or at least dandified, role of objects d'art, antiques commanding prices of five and ten dollars from women whose mothers had bought them as utilitarian objects for the same number of cents.

"Preserving time, hard as the work was, and hot, and demanding continuity for long hours, was nevertheless regarded as a pleasure by the old-time house-wife, probably one of the outstanding delights

of her year. Persons who were children then remember preserving time as a period when women hummed or sang as they stirred the pots, bustled about cheerfully—as far as possible from consciousness of feeling drudgery. Modern women of the cities, who never did it, and whose very nature, almost, has been changed by their environment, think of preserving as they think of the similarly gone old-time sewing, as something that must have been arduous. One doubts if that is the way it appears in retrospect to women who did it. Their reflections about the moderns would probably take the form of wonder how any woman could prefer to spend an autumn afternoon at bridge, watching the spots and similitudes of royal figures on shifting cards; or gazing at antic aperies on a silver screen in a dark and crowded room—rather than picking apples and pears from the low-hanging orchard boughs, carrying them in their aprons to the house, peeling them, stewing them; and then enjoying the sense of accomplishment on pouring the completed work into the jars; setting jars and bottles on a window-ledge where the colors glowed against the autumn sun, distilled essences of the orchard. Later, from the depths of the kitchen closet, their rich amber would reflect the cheerful winter fire.

“The mood of it went with the time of year; it came, of course, with the ripening fruit, and the preserving process added its contribution to the orchard scents that filled the atmosphere. . . . The work conveyed a kind of moral satisfaction, fulfilled ancient adages, copy-book maxims, and Bible precepts about thrift, providing for the future, reaping as one soweth. It made one feel kin to the bee, who buzzed about, a steady guest at the process. There was self-satisfaction, too, satisfaction . . . that made the house-wife a kin to the artist, a sharer of his joy of creating and completing . . . it was renewed at every opening of the closet door.”

The farm produced for all, and belonged to all. Each received according to his needs, gave according to his power. (We didn't need the Communists to teach us that). The family was a highly organized cooperative unit, economic, social, moral, religious. The family circle was the center of life, and closely linked with it was the local neighborhood. There was a wise division of labor. Wife and children helped in the home, the barn, the field. Some of the work was indeed burdensome and menial. And there was no punching of the clock and no thought of overtime.

The tools used were simple—the ax, saw, hoe, spade—though, of course, there was a gradual development of agricultural implements. Power was furnished by oxen, mules, and horses. Communications depended at their swiftest on horses or horse-drawn vehicles.

There was not much cash, but there was not much need for it, and the real values in land and goods were considerable. Exchange was often by barter. The needs which the farms could not supply came from the local store and local mill. There was additional help for every emergency in the neighborhood. Health care, education, recreation were largely local. Neighborliness was a part of the way of life.

The outlook on life was simple and wholesome, motivated by a sincere belief in God and the future life. The overwhelming majority of the rural dwellers accepted the scriptures and the fundamental Christian truths, though with varying degrees of loyalty. It was largely Protestant and loyal to the traditions of its forebears, though there were also Catholic groups in sections of the country. The moral code was the Ten Commandments. There was little divorce—and families were large. Highly prized were honesty, fidelity, thrift, love of country. Local patriotism was strong. The local church was more than a center of worship, and the influence of the minister and of the ministerial organizations in American rural life was notable.

There was a creative spirit and a sense of the beautiful manifested in the cultivation of the land, the building and furnishing and adorning of the home. In some sections beauty and utility were attested by the crafts, by the local drama, by the pageantry of festivals, by music, song, and dancing. The pageants and the fairs, the rustic gatherings for threshing, barn-raising, quilting, all are an expression of the spirit of community interest, mingling play with work.

It is hard for us today to conceive of the isolation of the rural community before the advent of the automobile and the hard-surface roads. In some few sections this isolation lasted until the present decade. Until the Federal projects brought such modern devices to the mountainous region of the South, there were whole counties in Tennessee in which there was not a single telephone or electric light. Yet federal workers found in these most isolated sections a native talent for music and song that belongs to the artistic heritage of the race.

It is evident that before the automobile and the good roads, before the telephone and the radio, Rural America was largely shut off from the cities and the rest of the world. If we add to this absence of means of communication the rather low standard of elementary education in most parts of the country, we can understand that there would be little knowledge and interest in the rest of the world.

Says Dr. Carl C. Taylor in "Restoration of Rural Culture:" "Except for local contacts, each neighborhood community was pretty much isolated from the rest of society. World events transpired days, weeks, and months before a knowledge of them came to these local communities. With many such events, the vast majority of local communities were not at all concerned, because they were not aware of their existence. Due to this relatively high degree of isolation and lack of market contacts, the rural material standard of living consisted of those things which could be, and were produced on the farms in the neighborhood. Food was generally plentiful, but the variety was often not very great. Housing was simple and sometimes poor, and household equipment practically always meager. Illiteracy was common, sickness was prevalent, and the death rate high. There were no radios, no running water or electricity in the homes, no automobiles or telephones. Practically no one read newspapers and few people read books." (P. 86, *Catholic Rural Life Objective, series III*. "Restoration of Rural Culture").

The picture we present is necessarily generic, and we might even say static. Lest we be accused of over-generalization and simplification, let us note that from the very beginning there were many who tilled a soil which belonged to others. Vast estates, especially in the East and South, were cared for by slave labor up to the time of the war between the states. Vast stretches of land were abandoned after brief periods of cultivation. George Washington complains in his time that "we ruin the lands that are already cleared, and either cut down more wood if we have it, or emigrate into the Western country." The evil caused by hasty clearing and bad farming, notably by Tyrant Cotton and Tyrant Tobacco, was appalling. Jefferson remarks that the Randolph farm was "the only one which has not suffered from the heavy rains," because it was protected through what we would call contour ploughing. He notes that the good example is being followed by everybody in the neighborhood "except tenants who have no interest in the preservation of the soil."

Quite obviously the term "self-sufficient farming" could not be applied to these, nor could the term farming as an occupation. The worst form of commercialism was found among the tobacco and cotton farmers whose practices were a curse rather than a blessing.

If we turn from the past to the present state of our agriculture we find that the evils just described have grown widespread. Millions of acres have been ruined. In Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Michigan an area of thirty-four millions of acres, more than ten times the area of Connecticut, has lost between one-fourth and three-fourths of its top soil. In the Dust Bowl about four millions of acres have been ruined, the equivalent of two-thirds of the state of Maryland. Water erosion has ruined eight Marylands. And the potential loss is still greater.

We mention these facts to show the harm already wrought and the danger which still threatens our rural culture, because if we destroy the land we destroy the very basis for any rural life. Hand in hand with this destruction of the soil went the loss of ownership on the part of those who tilled the soil. Farming has gradually become instead of an occupation and a way of life, a business enterprise. The huge commercial farm is taking the place of the small farm owned and operated by an independent American citizen proud of his heritage.

Says Dr. Carl C. Taylor: "Most farmers are today more concerned about producing products for sale than they are about producing them for their own consumption. Millions of dollars are spent annually in the purchase of farm machinery, seeds, fertilizers and other items which go to make up the cost of agriculture. Millions more are spent annually in the purchase of family consumption goods. The successful operation of an American farm now rests upon the favorable ratio of monetary input to monetary output. Even the worth of the land itself is measured in dollar values per acre, and farm mortgage debt is common and to be expected as a part of the financial structure of farming. Cash, share, and share-crop tenants comprise two-fifths of all our farmers, and between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 hired men are employed annually by the people who operate American farms. This is all vastly different from what farming was throughout most of the nation two or three generations ago." (P. 87, *ibid.*).

Gasoline and electricity have mechanized farm production. The burden of labor is lightened, but many farm laborers have been displaced, and the farmer has become "a machine operator, a large-scale operator." Moreover, the farmer is no longer isolated. Automobiles, good roads, newspapers, telephone, radio have brought the farmer into contact with the city, with all the world. The country school and church have declined. The city is the center of the farmer's life, in matters of health, education, religion, recreation. The city culture has triumphed on the land. The old-fashioned neighborhood is a rarity today. The farmer's children have migrated to the city to seek jobs, more congenial association, a more agreeable (to them) manner of life. The farmer himself often seeks to retire there in his old age or even in earlier years if there be the lure of greater profits.

With tenancy, commercialism, mechanization, have come new ideas, new attitudes to life. The process of change has been more than economic; it has been social, moral, religious. Economic insecurity on land and in the city has meant moral and psychological insecurity. The moral evils of the city now affect our whole social fabric.

If it is true that our democracy is in danger of being lost through the transformation just described in our rural culture and through the proletarianization of our working classes in the cities, then it is also true that every good American who seeks to save America will seek to reconstruct our rural culture as a part of a more general program of social and economic reconstruction.

If it is true that the Catholic Church in America must turn to the rural districts and the rural population to save the Catholic Church in our country—because of evils affecting our city life which others have already described in the previous discussions—then it follows that we must seek to reconstruct in America a Rural Catholic culture. The Church has always looked upon agriculture as the basic industry. "Among manual industries," says Johannes Janssen in his *History of the German People*, "none stood higher in the estimation of Canon Law than agriculture. It was looked upon as the mother and producer of all social organization and all culture, and consequently as the basis of national well-being. Canon Law exacted a special consideration for agriculture, and partly for this reason, that it tended in a higher degree than any other branch of labor to teach

those who practice it godly fear and uprightness. The farmer, so it is written in a Catholic Admonition, must be in all things protected and encouraged, for all depend upon his labor from the emperor to the humblest of mankind, and his handiwork is in particular honorable and well-pleasing to God."

If there is to be a revitalization of our rural life, I think it must mean a return to the ideals of the past. However, this does not mean a pure and simple reversion to the so-called horse and buggy days. We need not destroy the machine and the benefits of mechanization. A return to the ideals of the past should not rob us of any mechanical device which aids in production or lifts the oppressive burden of menial labor from human backs. There are ways of making the machine serve man and human ends. Some of them have been pointed out in these meetings. But four ends and ideals are desirable. Toward these objectives we must strive:

- 1) Economic and social and psychological security which once prevailed under self-sufficient farming.
- 2) The finer riches of rural culture through creative art, music, drama, folk recreation and community participation.
- 3) The qualities of personality and social values which arise from family and community life.
- 4) The benefits of mechanical and scientific achievement which remove drudgery, promote health, and bring comforts to millions though once accessible to only a few. (cf. Dr. Carl Taylor, *ibid.*)

Toward these ends we can work and cooperate with men of good will, whether Jew, Protestant, or Catholic. These ends can and must be included in a vast program of social reconstruction in accordance with Catholic ideals. A distinctly Catholic program of rural reconstruction is already well under way. It must continue and expand as only a truly Catholic program can.

By way of conclusion I should like to recommend what I consider practical means toward the consummation of such a program.

First of all, we must aim at destroying in our own minds and in the minds of our people, and most of all in the minds of students for the priesthood, the "capitalistic bias." Millions of our Catholics still look upon distinctly Catholic social and economic doctrine as

"Socialistic." Secondly, we must by every legitimate means indoctrinate our people with the notion that the social reform, the reconstruction of the social order, is the will of the Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit pontiff after pontiff has stressed the need for a social reform. Such reform is a providential means of destroying the baneful influence of Communistic propaganda and of bringing the masses back to Christ. There is need for the Crusader spirit. God wills it!

This paper was presented at the Catholic Rural Life Summer School held at St. Joseph's College July 24-26, 1945.

YESTERDAY'S SOLDIER

*Moorland softness, hilly quietness
Lies over Flander's fields,
For there the poppies grow each year
To hide beneath their flaming robes
The victims of another's plan.*

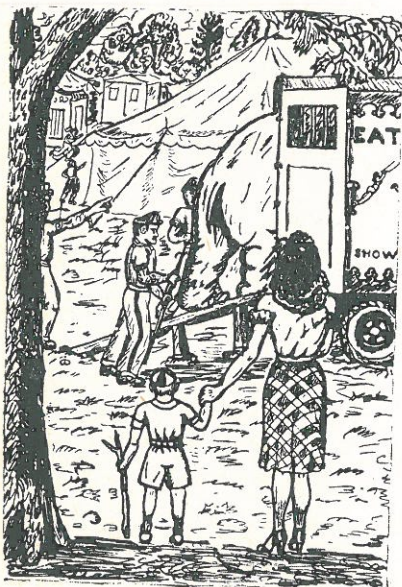
*Now Flander's fields have grown
And spread about the world;
You'll find them at Salerno,
Birzerte, Monteburg, Vitterno,
And many, far too many more.*

*Not enough poppies for a mantle;
Not enough flowers for a cover—
But still they lie, now at rest,
Below the vacant, bleak, white crosses,
The victims of another's greed.*

John P. Logan

On Circus Day

JAMES STORM



"Ma! Hey, ma!" A bolt of freckles and disheveled hair burst into the kitchen, almost knocking the breath out of Mrs. Moore.

"Johnny, must you shout? Do you want the neighbors to think I house a regular hoodlum here? Now take this garbage out to the alley and come right back and clean up and do your homework."

Eight-year old Johnny's eyes dropped and he turned red with embarrassment and temper. But he did as he was told. Ever since John Moore, Sr., had joined the fighting forces of Uncle Sam, the lad had been more restless and excitable. He missed his dad.

Later, as Johnny wiped the dishes for his mother, she saw the hurt look in his eyes. Or was it loneliness? Was she succeeding in being both mother and father to him? She wondered. Working in the factory was telling on her too—as much the stream of vulgarity as the long hours assembling motors.

In the living room Johnny, flat on the floor, chin on elbows, read the evening funnies while his mother reread a month-old letter. Presently he interrupted her.

"Mom!"

"Yes, Johnny."

"Tomorrow's Saturday."

"Yes?"

"We don't have any school."

"No?"

"There's a circus coming to town, and I wondered . . ."

"Now, Johnny, you know we can't go. I'll get time and a half at the G.E."

"But, mom, I don't want to go to the circus."

"Why, for goodness sake, child, what do you mean?"

Johnny's lip quivered. "I'd like . . . I'd like . . . I'd . . . Oh, heck!" And he burst out crying.

That was too much for Mrs. Moore. Snatching the lad from the floor, she hugged him close. Tear gems hung in her own eyes.

After a pause, "Go ahead, Johnny, don't be afraid to say it."

Johnny's jaw stiffened, his body tensed. "Can we get up early and see it come in? D-Dad always took me. It would seem like he was here."

"That's a good idea, Johnny." She knew now how very deeply the boy felt the absence of his dad, and the nostalgia made her fight for mastery. There was a quaver in her own voice as she added, "Run along to bed, now. I'll set the alarm so we won't be late."

"Aw, gee, Mom, don't cry. I'll be good, and dad'll be back in no time."

"God love you, darling. Off to bed now. I'll wake you early."

"Night, mother!" Johnny bounded to his room. Mrs. Moore took out the letter again and read the last paragraph. "This outfit may be deactivated. At least, that's the scuttlebutt. If so, some of us will be sent to other units; others will be coming back. You know, some make it; some wait. I love you! John."

Before the first threads of sunlight webbed the eastern sky, Johnny and his mother stumbled toward the sloping bank that encircled the circus grounds. For once there was no threat of rain on circus day.

Laughing and tugging all the way, Johnny had almost pulled his mother's arm out of place. "Hurry, mother, there are lights up on the hill. We'll miss some of the fun." A few other people were silhouetted against the horizon, the murmur of their voices indicating that they too had come to see the circus arrive.

Stake trucks had indeed reached the grounds. Activity seemed

to spring from the ground itself in the dim light as the two staking machines worked around the outline of the "big top." Giant Negroes pounded individual stakes into the earth, their lithe bodies swaying rhythmically.

As the red circle that was the sun pushed above the trees, a low hum of approaching motors crescendoed into a noisy roar.

"It's coming, mother." Johnny danced about. "Look, dad . . . " He caught himself in time.

Acrobats and hands tumbled out of the giant caravan. A motley crew. Johnny watched them agape. What mysteries those enclosed vehicles housing the animals contained he could only surmise. He was watching for something.

A truck larger than the rest came to halt. The endgate was dropped, and two huge elephants backed their way down the gang-plank. That was ecstasy. His mother held him by the shoulders as the workmen guided these immense beasts to a windlass that would hoist the pole of the main tent. Intent on the movements of the animals, he stared speechless.

His mother broke the trance. "We will have to go back now, Johnny, so I can be on time for work."

"Oh . . . " A little shake dispelled the complaint. Johnny looked up and smiled. "Al right, mother. I said I'd be good."

Down the hill and all the way back to their cottage, Johnny's tongue rattled vigorously: "That big trunk!" "Aren't their ears funny?" "Did you see him throw that loaf of bread into his mouth?" "I could stay there all day and watch the elephants."

The telephone was ringing frantically as they approached the house. Mrs. Moore trembled as she put the key into the lock. The door flew open and she dashed for the receiver.

"Long distance." "Is this Mildred Moore?" "We've been trying to get you for the past hour." "Hold the line, please."

"There you are. Go ahead please."

"Mildred?"

"John, dear! Where are you?"

"Oh, it's daddy, and he's coming home on circus day. Whooopeee!"

What Greater Vocation

BY ROGER V. LEY

When the war came to an end in Europe on May 7, 1945, our unit, Service Company — 16th Infantry of the First Division, was in Franzenbach, Czechoslovakia, a small town near the Bavarian border. Delightful peace and calmness ruled the atmosphere, and the warm May air, teamed with brilliant sunshine, made the weather most pleasant. Our company officers, taking advantage of this inviting interlude, spent much of their spare time visiting the surrounding countryside and villages.

On one of these excursions our Major, a stout-hearted, Catholic Irishman, accompanied by the Regimental Chaplain, accidentally met the famous stigmatic, Theresa Neumann. Upon his return to the CP, he told his story of the "very strange woman" he had met. After hearing the narrative, and recalling to mind that I had been told of this remarkable woman during my grade-school days, I could not rest until the Major had given me permission to organize a pilgrimage to Konnersreuth, which was only twenty miles from our location. On May 14 my ambition became a reality; more than a dozen men, including several of Protestant Faith, made the journey with me.

The road led through forests and over mountains that greeted us with their beauty and attractiveness. From a distance, the little town of Konnersreuth, which lies on the outskirts of these natural beauties, seemed asleep. Cloistered as it is among the Bavarian hills in quiet solitude, it was absorbing the healing rays of the bright sun, apparently trying to recover from the shock and damage it had suffered from German shells during the closing days of the war.

We attracted considerable attention as we rode through the shell-torn village in search of Theresa's home. Curiously the inhabitants watched us from windows and open doorways, and a few ventured into the street to further satisfy their curiosity. Americans, their liberators, were still strange beings to them, for only a few days previous, German soldiers, instigators of their misery and suffering, still ruled the town. Yes, we were practically total strangers, but the hopeful look in their eyes proved that we were more than welcome.

The old buildings of the village are close to each other. From

their midst, an ancient, beautiful church rises above them. Around the church, and adding to its beauty, is a rather large walled garden. No other gardens or trees are to be seen in the center of town; here and there, potted flowers could be seen in the windows. Dust and other debris was littered over the streets. Some homes were badly damaged; with others, only shattered windows marked the scar of war. Such was the home town of Theresa Neumann at the close of the war.

After inquiring of a poor native, we were directed to the home which is near the church. Whether it was just luck, or whether it was God's protection, strangely enough neither Theresa's home nor the church had been damaged much. As several of the braver natives had followed our truck to Theresa's door, we had many watchful eyes upon us as we entered. They seemed to understand the purpose of our mission; they knew their Theresa was a very famous person.

Father Naber, parish priest and lifelong friend of Theresa's, greeted us with a heart warming smile, and we were ushered into a rather large, tidy reception room. A few other American soldiers were already there; one of them was a Catholic chaplain who could speak German fluently. He cheerfully obliged us by serving as an interpreter during our visit, which simplified conversation and enabled us to learn more of her history.

Before we had all been seated, Theresa made her appearance. Silently she entered among us; yet with her presence the room seemed charged with a pleasant warmth like that of a sanctuary. At first glance I thought her a nun, with her long black dress and white headpiece, but she is just a common laywoman with rather masculine features. Her cheerful smiles and greetings of welcome made us feel at ease as if we had known her all our lives. During the first few minutes, she made captives of our hearts. Being a very active and polite lady, she busied herself at once finding chairs for those of us who were yet to be seated. This accomplished, and after she had given each of us a warm handshake, she sat down with her visitors. It was then that Father Naber told the story of her life.

Theresa Neumann was born April 18, 1898, being the oldest of ten children. Her father was a humble tailor and part-time farmer. Like other children she went to the village school and later to a school of domestic science some distance from Konnersreuth. She was every inch an ordinary child, differing in no wise from other village children.

Theresa was good, ambitious, and pious; so were her schoolmates. She had average intelligence, but she made no special advancement, not even in matters of religion. Making the way of the cross was indeed one of her most liked practices, but other children of her time also enjoyed doing that. There were even times when young Theresa misbehaved in church, for which her parents punished her by making her kneel on a rough log.

At the age of sixteen, Theresa began working for a neighborhood farmer. Many were the jobs she had to do, including burdensome farm labor and tasks in the inn. Kept busy through long hours of the day, she had no time for reading or extensive religious practices. However, she became very strong, both spiritually and physically, and the fact that she was pure and chaste was proved by the way she conducted herself when anyone dared to approach her improperly. In a word, she was a strong, somewhat masculine figure, with normal, persevering virtue.

In the spring of 1919, a fire broke out near the home of her employer. Everyone in Konnersreuth aided in keeping the fire from spreading. Theresa, for two hours, handed heavy buckets of water to men who poured it on the flames. During this strenuous task she felt a terrible pain knife her back; it kept getting worse until she had to leave the fire and return home, unable to stand fully erect. Other illnesses set in, and later, while attempting to do minor housework, she fell backward. Once she fell down the cellar stairs and was knocked unconscious. In the summer of 1919 the first signs of blindness made their appearance.

Within a year's time, Theresa was partially paralyzed, totally blind, and her hearing was impaired. Deep, painful wounds formed on the left foot which had also become crooked. Her whole exterior body was touched with this mysterious malady. It affected her internally as well, so that she did not care to eat, and at times found it very difficult to breathe. For five years she suffered; for five years her home was her bed.

Many diagnoses, made by different doctors and surgeons, resulted in disagreeing opinions concerning her case. Years were spent in a futile effort to cure her. One famous German doctor who followed Theresa's illness throughout became a Catholic after being inspired by her bravery and never-failing patience. Theresa Neumann under-

went numerous examinations and investigations, and finally the men of the medical profession announced her case was beyond their ability to solve. If Theresa was to be completely cured, apparently Almighty God would have to do it.

On April 25, 1923, Theresa was miraculously cured of an ulcer in the stomach. The sudden cure followed an application of a relic of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. A few days later she began a novena to this same saint, and shortly after, her blindness became a thing of the past. Her left foot, which had been crooked and which festered with deep sores, was healed completely in May of 1925. This remarkable cure followed the placing of rose petals that had touched the grave of the Little St. Theresa between the bandages. Thus the series of cures worked on Theresa until she was completely normal again. Another strange phenomenon concerning her recovery is the fact that visions and ecstasies accompanied the cures.

The voice heard in the visions was always that of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. Theresa has never seen the figure of this saint, but only her hand. The voice told her that she would eventually recover, but that she would have to suffer in a different manner. These strange and mysterious announcements were fulfilled when the stigmatization appeared.

In the middle of Lent, 1926, the stigmata began to appear while she was lying in bed. That night she saw the Savior for the first time as He knelt in the garden of Olivet. It was during this first vision of Christ that the wound in her side made its strange advent. From then on until Good Friday, she had visions of the next three mysteries of Christ's passion, but she did not witness the actual crucifixion. That Good Friday she was in complete ecstasy, and the blood poured from the wound in her side and from her eyes. Later the wounds on the crown of her head, on her shoulder, hands, and feet made their painful appearance.

Since then and to this day, Theresa suffers on all Fridays of the year, with the exception of the Fridays during the joyous seasons after Christmas and Easter. Her most intense suffering begins on Spy Wednesday of Holy Week; it ends with Theresa almost at the point of death, at dawn of Easter Sunday. She then arises from her bed as if nothing had happened and goes to Mass and Holy Com-

munition. During her ecstasies of Holy Week, she has visions of Christ's passion and death, and she relates the story of the crucifixion without fault while in her coma. However, instead of the whole cross, as is generally pictured, in her visions she sees Christ carrying the cross in two parts, one piece on each shoulder. Her narrative of the passion is spoken in the same language that Christ spoke (Aramaic), although normally she speaks only the German language. It is only during these ecstasies that she is able to speak other languages besides her native tongue.

Scenes of the passion are not the only ones of which Theresa has visions. At Christmas time she beholds the birth and childhood of Christ; at Easter she sees Jesus triumphant; and at Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Blessed Virgin and many other saints are also objects of her visions.

Another strange characteristic of Theresa Neumann is that she has not eaten food or drunk any liquid for many years. The Sacred Host is the only substance that she has partaken of since September, 1927. To obtain objective proof of this, she has been spied upon almost constantly by nurses, doctors, and her family as well.

It can be well understood that this stigmatic should draw the attention of the rest of the world. Again she had to undergo numerous investigations and examinations. Doctors of fame tried to cure her present wounds, but to no avail. Once more her case was pronounced beyond the assistance of medical science. Some famous men have called her a fake; others, after being with her for a considerable length of time, were converted to the faith. Theresa, in all her simplicity, is still willing to be examined by authorities; she has no fear of them.

Father Naber concluded his story by pointing out to us that Theresa offers her sufferings for the benefit of souls. Through her prayers, agonies and spiritual life, hundreds of fallen-away Catholics have returned to the fold, and many conversions have been recorded in her favor. Theresa had wanted to become a missionary in the foreign field, but she now feels she is accomplishing more through her stigmatization. What greater vocation could God give to any one of His creatures?

Before we left her reception room, Father Naber gave us a few high lights on her association with the German troops. During the

German occupation she asked the ration board personnel if it would be possible for her to use her food coupons for soap since she did not require food. She needs much soap for the purpose of washing her clothes often, especially the linens that are used to absorb the flowing blood. Although this modest request was refused, it left fear in the hearts of the Germans.

I enjoyed the privilege of giving her a bar of G.I. soap and three candy bars. She accepted the candy, not for herself, but for some children in a nearby hospital. To show her gratitude, she gave me an autographed holy picture, which is one of my most prized possessions. Inscribed thereon, written in German, are the words, "God bless you. Theresa Neumann." She can sign only ten or twelve of these before the pain in her hand causes her to discontinue.

Even though she is a world-famous personality, she is very modest and reluctant to speak about herself. Many minutes of fast talking were expended in persuading her to pose for snapshots. This was accomplished, but as luck would have it, none of the pictures taken developed. The film must have been defective.

With a pleasing smile and a warm handclasp, Theresa bade us goodbye. It was then that I actually felt the incrustated wound on her right hand. Something very strange about the thin scabs that cover the perforations in her hands is the fact that they are perfectly square. When she goes into her ecstasies, these scabs vanish and blood begins to flow freely. Since it was on a Tuesday when we visited her, we did not see this happen.

After leaving her presence, we visited the church across the dusty street. Mere words cannot express adequately the beauty and splendor inside this house of God. The poor peasants of Konnersreuth are to be praised and congratulated for building and maintaining such a wonderful structure. Truly, it is an expression of their deeply imbedded faith and trust in their Creator.

The story of Konnersreuth is a strange, mysterious one. But the strangest part of it is that there is no falsity connected with it. Much has been written about this marvel; many people believe, and many retain their doubts. But there is not the least doubt in my mind that she is one chosen by God to aid Him in the salvation of souls. Certainly her vocation in life is one of much greater value to him than that of a nun.

Miner's Luck

JOHN M. NAGELE



"Shaft C has caved in!"

Up on the knoll overlooking Tomahawk Creek stood the gabled Randall mansion. Fanned by gentle breezes and shaded by leafy oaks, it sneered at the ramshackle huts of the miners down in the valley. Painted only with coal dust, these grimy shacks seemed to plead for just a little of the warmth and comfort of the mine owner.

Pat Moore was one of the miners. Five years earlier he had landed in America with Maureen, his wife, and Michael, their infant son. New York, with its clamor, stupified him. With the few dollars remaining, he moved his family to Pennsylvania. Work he found in the mines, but not the beautiful simplicity of the

land of the peasant and the shamrock.

This evening Pat dragged himself home from work as usual. His face was caked with soot; his overalls, gritty with coal dust. Even the empty lunchbox seemed a load to carry. "I won't tell Maureen about the accident," he thought, "though it might have happened to me as well as to Sullivan."

From a washtub in the shed behind the hovel he called home, Pat washed his aching body. All the hardships of his life raced through his mind; yet when he came into the kitchen he pulled one of Maureen's curls, which unraveled and spun back.

"Pat, you scared me," Maureen spoke coquettishly.

"Sure, and I didn't mean to, colleen. And how are the children?"

"Michael came home from school with a fever. Peggy's asthma seems worse."

"It's the coal dust, Maureen. The little tykes' lungs are filled with it."

"Hush, Pat! We must live. Come, eat your supper. I have boiled potatoes, cabbage, and a bit of stew from Sunday."

"Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts . . ." Pat could hardly go on with grace. "These thy gifts!" Two sick children, cabbage, warmed-up stew! An aching back! His Irish faith supported him.

"How was your work today, Pat?" asked Maureen as she poured him a cup of weak coffee.

Pat sat silent for a while, weighing his thoughts. "Wife," he began at last, "not even tolerable. I've been thinking that we must give up the struggle here. With the poor pay, even the long hours don't support the family. It's all right for that mine owner, Randall, to sit up there in his mansion and live off the sweat of us poor fools down under the earth while our children don't get the food to keep them healthy."

"You are tired, Pat. Tomorrow morning you will not be so discouraged."

"Yes, I am tired, Maureen. It's worse than that. Today Barney Sullivan was struck by a rotten crossbeam which collapsed. He was killed outright."

"Oh! God have mercy on his soul," ejaculated the woman.

"Barney had no insurance for his family of ten," continued Pat. "He couldn't afford it. And what does Randall do? He sends his sympathy. That's what he gives us miners—grudging sympathy. Over at Morgan's it's the same. No square deal. We go down into those shafts every day with a tool in our hands and a prayer in our hearts that we may see the light of day again in the evening. They tell of strikes over in Scranton, but those people starve too when the men are not working. The men are getting restless. Some day these big shots will find that they have no men to mine their coal. Maureen, all we want is a decent home, an honest wage, a future for our children."

Speechless for a moment, Maureen began with deliberation. "Pat, you are right. I feel so sorry for Mrs. Sullivan and the children. I'll run over tonight and give her comfort."

"It isn't comfort they want," Pat almost shouted; "it's bread."

"I have an idea, Pat. Maybe we can go to Philadelphia. My sister Kate will crowd us in. She writes that work is picking up there. Shall I tell her that we will come next week?"

A slight luster crept into Pat's weary eyes as he reflected. "Yes, Maureen, tell her. This is Thursday. Two more days in the mine, and I'll fling my pick and shovel onto Randall's front porch."

* * * * *

Drills screeched. Shovels scraped. Small engines with long details of coal cars passed from shaft to shaft. Little beacons from the miners' caps flickered everywhere. "Black gold for Randall!" He knew the miners saluted one another with that slogan.

Suddenly, an earth-vibrating rumble. Silence. Then the scream of the emergency whistle. A foreman came running down the line shouting, "Shaft C has caved in. Bring your picks and shovels. We'll have to find the bodies.

"Find the bodies!" groaned an old man. His voice was like a mocking echo.

"Who was working Shaft C?" inquired Tim Dooley of his partner.

"Moore was one," replied the other. "I'm not sure of the rest. Whoever they are, they never knew what hit them."

"Pat told me this morning he was going to quit. Going to Philadelphia. Wonder what his wife will do now."

"She probably hasn't a cent saved. Let's take up a collection."

* * * * *

A week later a telegram reached Mrs. Kathryn Canty in Philadelphia. It read: "Pat killed in mine accident. Meet me and children at four-thirty tomorrow afternoon."

On Looking into Dante's Inferno

JOHN BOSCH

First learned layman of the Middle Ages in Western Europe, Dante Alighieri is the first great vernacular poet. He came at the time when the Troubadors, Trouveres, and Minnesingers were on the decline. As leading poet of the Middle Ages, he is more secure than Homer is of antiquity or Shakespeare of modern times.

Dante's age was one of fermentation in religion, philosophy, and politics. He lived amid the heresy, free thought, and revival of philosophy that followed the year 1,000. Aquinas was writing the *Summa*; Bacon was developing his modern philosophy. In politics, Italy saw civil liberty grow. The Lombard League was secure, with civic liberties in vogue throughout Italy. Inter-relationships were only such as to maintain, after a fashion, what was very much like our modern balance of power. Thence came the intense political life, the kaleidoscopic changes, the incessant wars.

In his *Divine Comedy* Dante portrays the world in the symbolic language of abstract thought as was the Medieval fashion. His great poem is a vision, and the personages of his drama are disembodied souls in the realm of the spirit. He plunges into his subject somewhat as Daniel does in the story of Belschazzar's feast, disregarding the tradition of caution advanced by Horace.

Whatever subsidiary interpretation Dante may have desired to make applicable to his *Divine Comedy*, the main one is that it signify life after death, and by so doing convert a corrupt society. Literally, it is the story of life after death simply treated.

In the *Inferno*, the first division of the *Comedy*, Dante treats of the fruit of evil on earth and illustrates God's justice toward men, showing how man is punished through his own demerit by wilful abuse of God-given faculties. Dante does not gloat over the tormented; he is inclined to pity them. Vergil, highest reason, upbraids him for this because by so doing he brings compassion on the judgment of God; Vergil, however, also praises him when he obediently spurns such condemned souls as the arrogant Fillipo Argenti.

The *Inferno* might well be termed the diary of a human soul, the scene being the spiritual world of which we are truly denizens. But it is written as a poem, not as an abstract treatise. For this reason, everything is set forth by sensible types and images. The art of Dante's time demanded sharp, even shocking comparisons that made a genuine impression.

Dante's hell is not a place of physical torture in the sense that the body itself suffers pain. Bodies as we know them are not present. His hell is a condition of the soul so horrible that no imagination, not even Dante's own as he admits, could possibly show the moral deformity brought about by sin or his abhorrence of it.

*Hell hath no limits nor is circumscribed
As one fell place: for where we are is hell
And where hell is we must ever be.*

On the one hand, Dante tells us that evil may seem good through our own sensual eyes "which may even make a crooked hag look like a beautiful siren;" on the other, he shows that reason, enlightened by the grace of God, enables us to see evil as it really is, full of stench and corruption. No doubt he had studied the Hebrew prophets, who surely set him no example of tact and convention in dealing with enemies. He saw how divine justice ultimately overtakes society in the ruin of private and civil morals. Writing for the good of Florence, he deemed it the duty of a loyal citizen to speak severely in righteous anger against vice as its legitimate quarry.

What disillusion Dante put into his *Inferno*. There were but two things in the material world that he loved deeply—Beatrice and Florence. When they were taken away, he mourned vehemently as he had loved vehemently. Without his own *via crucis* he could not have created such dire torments. Without a burning love for God, the object of his spiritual aspirations, he could not have harbored such an intense hatred of sin.

Definitely the *Inferno* is not a work that may be assimilated entirely upon a first reading; for Dante, having mastered Aristotle and St. Thomas, incorporated their doctrine into his work to such a degree that Pope Benedict XV dubbed it, "The juice of Christian philosophy and theology." The reader will not grasp this enormous content until he has read the *Inferno* a number of times. As he meets

certain passages again and again, new meanings will unfold like a slowly blossoming flower, with movement imperceptible yet actual.

James Russell Lowell says that Dante conquered by force of substantive and verb alone, without a single epithet. Some of the expression in the *Inferno* is especially admirable; the passage in which the poet describes his own person as the only material body in hell follows.

*... and bade me enter next
Nor till my entrance seemed the
Vessel freighted ...
Cutting the waves goes on the
Ancient prow; more deeply than
With others it is wont.*

Two striking figures met in the *Inferno* are these:

*Nor ever was arrow from the
Cord dismissed, that ran its
Way so nimbly through the
Air, as the small bark that through
The waves I spied.*

* * *

*Not so thick a veil in winter
E'er hath Austrian Danube spread
O'er her course.*

No epic poem, not even the *Nibelungenlied*, has beauty of expression to match the *Inferno*. The great Teutonic epic has a savage grandeur about it that fires the natural man, never going down deep to his soul. It merely arouses the emotions.

The *Inferno*, as well as the rest of the *Divine Comedy*, may be compared in fanciful analogy to a gothic cathedral. It came out of the beliefs and superstitions of common people, as the old cathedrals were built with their gratuitous labor. Their fancy found expression in the various torments and in the structure of hell, as it found an outlet in the carved statuettes filling countless niches. As in an old cathedral we have a panorama of the fervid faith of the Middle Ages, so in the *Inferno* we have a panorama of thirteenth century Italian people. Dante's hell is a complete and harmonious cathedral over whose altar hangs the four-pointed emblem of suffering, a sign of the power and justice of God.

She Is So Circumspect and Right

RICHARD J. REIMONDO

In paging through a number of anthologies of English poets I have noticed that almost invariably the poem chosen to represent Alice Meynell is the one entitled "The Shepherdess." It is like a diamond in a setting of beautiful design. Here we have in eighteen short lines an epitome of her ideals, her philosophy of poetry, and her style. As one author has put it, the line quoted as the title of this work "might stand in a phrase as the key to Alice Meynell's style." Truly she is a "shepherdess of sheep" and "her flocks *are* thoughts"—thoughts expressing in beautiful paradoxes the mysteries of the Catholic religion which have time and again challenged the poets of every age for adequate expression. Observe the following, taken from the poem, "I Am the Way:"

*Access, Approach
Art Thou, Time, Way, and Wayfarer.*

The characteristic restraint which envelopes her poetry is quaintly presented to us in the lines:

*She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;*

The motive and reason for her behavior:

She has her soul to keep.

It is not my object, however, to dwell upon the picture that Mrs. Meynell has penned of herself in her lines of verse; I wish to enter into a brief discussion of a number of her poems expressive of that religious quality termed by critics as mysticism. The poems I have chosen to consider as truly representative of this type of her poetry are: "The Unknown God," "A General Communion," "Christ in the Universe," and "I Am the Way."

Speaking of Mrs. Meynell's religious poetry, Anne Kimball Tuell in her book, *Mrs. Meynell and Her Literary Generation*, says:

**"These are, with some exceptions, her best in form,
of that gnomic brevity which is her sign of excellence
both for prose and poetry."**

True, she is not so brief as only to "say the syntax and leave the verb and pronoun out;" nevertheless, she is brief and concentrated in her expression. She contents herself with a minimum of words, but always the right words. One of the most striking examples of her quiet restraint in uttering great thoughts is her little gem of four lines, "Via et Veritas et Vita."

*You never attained to Him? If to attain
Be to abide, that may be.
Endless the way, followed with how much pain.
The way was He!*

The normal religious poet takes us incredibly into his confidence; he reveals in all simplicity and candor his experiences of ardor and anguish. All these Mrs. Meynell respects in silence as modesties of nature.

Thus does Mrs. Meynell's poetry gain intimacy by its very silence and restraint—an intimacy always possessed by utterance from depths. This restraint of emotion as Alfred Noyes says, "was not merely negative . . . her silences were part of her music." Rather than express emotion openly and passionately, Mrs. Meynell insinuates and suggests it. Behold the awful power, pregnant with emotion, like spiritual lava, slumbering imprisoned within these four lines taken from "Christ In the Universe:"

*No planet knows that this
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.*

But now we must proceed to an analysis of Mrs. Meynell's more important poems of mysticism. We have already stressed her characteristic silence and restraint; but whenever one goes about studying her works he must come back to this same quality again and again.

Just what do we mean by true mystic poetry? In answer to this I would say along with Miss Tuell:

"Common parlance ignorantly holds the word mysticism synonymous with emotional religion, and dubs as 'mystic' the lyric of the most ardent palpitations."

True mysticism does not display itself in gushings of religious rapture but in a deep and truly meditative silence and contemplation. Herein rests Mrs. Meynell's claim to a place among the "company of right mystics." She is as chary as possible in her use of an earthly medium to express heavenly thoughts. The rest, as we have already said, "she respects in silence as the modesties of nature."

In "The Unknown God" we have Mrs. Meynell's poetry of the Mass at its highest. It is plain and simple. In the life of a stranger nourished at Communion, who is God's "in all his strife, all his felicity, his good and ill, in the assaulted stronghold of his will," the poetess recognizes and confesses the presence of Christ, the incarnate Deity. From her innermost soul she contemplates the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation and, overwhelmed by its greatness, turns to her Eucharistic Lord, present in this stranger's "unknown heart" and begs that Christ, from His secret throne in that "separate dwelling" will give her grace! Grace—not riches, power, or fame—but as a true mystic, the grace to advance in the knowledge and contemplation of God.

"I saw the throng, so deeply separate." Thus does Mrs. Meynell begin "A General Communion"—a poem on the mystical body of Christ. The throng of devout communicants kneeling at the holy table are "deeply separate" and "struck apart" from each other—speaking spiritually, not physically. Man cannot find union with man, and so each one partakes of the Sacred Species, completely broken off from all other spiritual and mental connections. Man protests. He wants truly spiritual brothers and sisters but cannot in any way obtain them. There must be a way! There is. As they "each assunder, absorb the multiplied, the ever unparted Whole, "they become "a thousand single central daisies . . . a thousand of the one;" Thus is expressed the relationship between each and among all of the faithful—the doctrine of the Mystical Body. "In Christ we are one."

In October, 1914, Katherine Bregy wrote:

**"'Christ In the Universe' is one of the most daring,
one of the most Catholic, even one of the most theo-
logical poems attempted by any recent writer."**

This poem, though it may be somewhat fanciful, is still an expression of a beautiful faith, wonderfully used in imagining and interpreting wonderful possibilities. The poem is quiet and reverent in attitude, yet bold and overwhelming in its implications. No less a thought than the possibility of the salvation of other worlds is broached in these lines. The theme is, of course, purely hypothetical; but it is superb in its suggestion. Is our secret of the sweet Incarnation and brutal death of our Savior the only one of its kind in the universe? Are other heavenly bodies adorned with soteriological memorials, even as "this our wayside planet . . . bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave?" If there were other worlds to redeem, did Christ sojourn on them? And if He did, in what guise? The answer to these and many other questions is quite calmly and powerfully given by the poetess when she says:

*O be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a man.*

Last of all, we come to a consideration of the poem, "I Am the Way." The genius of this poem consists in its paradoxical brevity and in its use of terrestrial images and symbols to put the celestial meaning in relief. Thus by a quick succession of common, short words an easily imaginable picture is built from which, after further study, we are able to draw hitherto invisible inferences. Thus is the well-known figure of a pilgrimage turned into an expression of faith, a ray of hope for a beleaguered traveler. Our life is but a pilgrimage. Over the winding road we stumble, trusting ourselves to the footsteps of One who has gone before—the

*Access, Approach,
Time, Way, and Wayfarer.*

And so we come to the end of our brief discussion of Mrs. Meynell's religious poetry. That it is truly great, both artistically and devo-

tionally, one would hardly deny. Mrs. Meynell, by her quiet, unassuming verses, has showered this world of ours with little gems of thought—thought which has probably led many a wayward seeker to the path which ends in eternal happiness. Mrs. Meynell was a leader, and without a doubt, quite militant in her own quiet manner.

In concluding an essay on Alice Meynell, Katherine Bregy says:

"She has borne the pennant of the Ideal, with never a dip of the banner, over many a causeway, up many a battlemented height. She has, by many and by One, been found faithful. Scarcely shall we find a more adequate praise for this English writer than her own praise of the Spanish Velasquez—that she has 'kept the chastity of art when other masters were content with its honesty.'"

For a final touch to our picture of Alice Meynell, I think these lines from her own pen are most appropriate:

VICTORY

Weary Knight

*Rest your shattered lance,
Lay down your pike and shield,
So battered by the days and nights of war.*

Tired Knight

*Lean against your banners
Spread across the brightened skies,
And sleep, the victor's sleep.*

Glorious Knight

*Sink into the arms of peace,
For your labors, blessed by God,
Have won the cause of right.*

John P. Logan

Toby's Barney

THOMAS J. JOYCE

It was in the spring of the year that the thoughts of bachelor Toby Bell turned to his only love with renewed vigor—the dog population of the village. Looking north toward the extremity of the main street any morning, one would have seen a bent figure come shuffling down the street. As the figure approached closer, one could discern the long-visored railroad cap perched slouchily on an unkempt white head. The figure was clothed in a greasy jacket and a slovenly pair of overalls, both draped like a burlap sack. The legs of the overalls drooped around the heels so that their fringed ends partially stifled the noise of the heavy shoes that clopped along on the uneven bricks. In one hand was a gallon can containing scraps of meat and bones. Sniffing greedily along at his heels were four or five dogs that were following to share the contents of the can. That figure was the village character, Toby Bell.

Toby found no difficulty in gaining the friendship and fidelity of all the canines that strayed through the streets of the small town. Twice daily he would bend his steps toward the drug store, where he would supplement his scraps and bones with two cans of commercial dog food; then down into the railroad yards he would go, with his canine companions following behind and all around him.

At the appointed feeding ground each dog would go to the tin plate Toby had given him and anxiously await his share of the food. No dog ever stole anything from another. Toby wouldn't allow that.

There was one dog among the pack that Toby liked best. He was Barney, a big, white Collie. Everyone liked Barney. He had grown to be a favorite in the village. His antics were charming, and he seemed to have a dashing personality—if one can speak of a dog having personality.

Barney was smart. He was frequently seen carrying one of the bones given him by Toby to some secret hiding place. The big Collie also made it a habit to meet the trains that stopped at the station, and he seemed to take pleasure in entertaining the transient passengers with his repertoire of tricks. He would sit up and beg with his pleading eyes, or he might lie down and play dead. But his

biggest thrill was that of carrying packages for anyone who would let him. These antics endeared Barney to the village folk. But his reign was short-lived.

About the middle of May Toby was found dead in his shabby bachelor's quarters at the edge of town. He had died suddenly. There was no one to mourn his passing except the dog pack he had loved so well. And it was plainly evident that the hungry horde missed Toby, because there was now no one to fill their empty tin plates.

Barney's sense of loss went deeper than the others'. He sought out Toby's tumble-down shack, where he took up a vigil outside the door.

Toby had carried an insurance policy which allowed for a decent burial. The village officials arranged to have him laid to rest in the new cemetery on top of the hill. When the casket was removed from the shack and placed in the hearse, Barney seemed to know. As the hearse was driven slowly to the cemetery, the big Collie fell in behind and followed at a respectable distance. The dog maintained his distance as the last rites were given and the casket lowered into the grave. Barney watched as the people withdrew and the two remaining men went methodically about the process of filling the grave.

Upon finishing their task, these two climbed into their car and drove off. As the car passed through the gates of the graveyard, the big dog arose from his position and walked to the fresh grave. He climbed upon the mound, where he lay down as though he were to keep old Toby company.

Barney was seen to lie on the grave for two days and, of course, it was presumed by those who saw him that the dog had not eaten in that length of time. One lady of the village put together what would be a fine meal for any hungry dog and, taking it to the cemetery, tried to entice Barney to come and eat. But the Collie only retreated to a safe distance each time the woman approached. There he stood, watching her with big, doleful eyes. When she backed off, Barney would again post himself on the fresh mound of earth. Eventually, the good woman abandoned her idea.

That same night Red Daniels heard a noise in his chicken house. This fellow Red had parked his trailer in a vacant lot at the edge of

town some six months earlier and had taken up squatters' rights. He wasn't liked in the village because of his fiery temper and sour personality.

Hearing the noise, Red grabbed his loaded rifle and, jumping to the door of his trailer, spied a big, white dog running across the lot carrying something in his mouth. Taking aim, Red fired. The big dog fell, dropped his load, and rolled over a couple of times. Red ran to where the dog was struggling, but before he reached the spot, the dog arose, retrieved his load, and bounded off into the darkness.

Next morning, as the mayor of the village approached to post an order of eviction against Red, he noticed a trail of blood leading out on a dirt path up to the highway. The lot was vacant. Being of a curious nature (as are all small-town mayors), he followed the sanguine trail as it jogged drunkenly up the concrete road and over the hill. As he passed the crest of the hill, His Excellency could see that the red trail had left the road and veered off into the cemetery. As you might guess, the curiosity of the mayor turned to suspicion. Visions of fiendish crimes began racing through his head.

The trail of blood now began to show signs of a heavy body falling every few steps. The situation was wrought with possibilities. What could this be?

Following the now profuse trail of blood, the mayor found that it led right up to the freshest grave in the cemetery—Toby Bell's grave. There, with his forefeet barely upon the mound of his beloved benefactor, lay Barney, with a ragged hole shot through his midsection. In his jaws was a bone which he had apparently tried to bring to Toby, to share it with his best friend.

Noticing where the earth had been disturbed at the head of the grave, the mayor dug there with his hands. To his astonishment, he unearthed a cache of dried bones. Barney had put them there to return the favors old Toby had given him as best he could in his dog-like gratitude.

That was too much. His Excellency was thoroughly confused, not knowing whether to explode in wrath because the dog had been shot or whether to marvel at the near human thing this Collie had done. In his consternation he hurried back to the village to spread the news.

It was later learned that Barney had always secretly buried his bones in the vacant lot Red Daniels occupied. The dog had been going there under the cover of night to retrieve them.

Now there is a plaque in the railroad yards at the very spot where Toby fed his dog pack. It reads, "To Toby's Barney—a Dog with a Heart."

The last I heard was that Red Daniels took his trailer and all his accouterments and sneaked off in the middle of the very same night he shot Barney.

MY LOVE FOR YOU

*It crept up like the mist
And filled the air with fancies
To wrap and clothe in softness
All my thoughts of you.*

*It pierced the clouds with sunbeams
And chased the shadows far
To brighten up with beauty
All my dreams of you.*

*It washed the stars in moonlight
And bathed the night with silence
To steep and twine in loveliness
All my memories of you.*

John P. Logan

Destination - - - Reverie

JOHN ROYLE



“Ahhhhhhh!”

—————a few moments pause, undoubtedly for the lungs to procure enough air to insure a longer and more defined——

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

Bucky was smelling his way through the blossoms lining the creek's bank. Cherry blossoms they were, bending the limbs in expectation of a future bountiful harvest. And they were also bending Bucky's will towards an afternoon

at the creek rather than one at school.

His red-chequered jersey peeked from the sides and neck of his capacious overalls; his ruddy hair, trying its best to escape the imprisoning walls of his straw hat, succeeded at certain frayed apertures. Intermittently the toe of his boot met a stone and sent it flying. However, a frown united his freckles to a dark-brown cloud as he pouted to a nearby tree:

“Awh, Gee! Who wans ta go ta school on an afternoon like this anyway—ta old ‘Fussbudget’ and his readin’, ‘riting’, and ‘rithmetic. Awh Gee!”

The outcome of the struggle was undoubtable. What else could be expected? There's Bucky; there's the playful brook; there are those fragrant blossoms, and not to be forgotten is that youthful maiden, Spring herself. Sum them up, subtract the resistance of a small boy's will, add the reassurance of a boring afternoon at school, and Spring's victory is the answer.

A frolicking breeze rumbled the liberated curls of the youthful Tom Sawyer now lolling midst the young spring flowers and tender grasses that decked the brook's bank. Dreamily he prodded tiny pebbles

down into the sparkling water. The brook tinkled back its joy for play as the pebbles glided flakily to its sandy bed.

But as the pebbles settled, the ripples they caused ambled on. A faint amble to be sure; a mischievous Spring's proffered play had infected them too, and they moved reluctantly, playing in the nooks along the bank. From behind half-submerged logs they peeped co-quettishly at one another; from behind jutting rocks they stalked and slid from one another.

Some of the ripples died as they rolled upon the bank. In their infant strength they fought to live. Repeatedly they plodded back into the heart of the stream only to be forced again upon the bank, there to expire. Others lolled along, however, until suddenly they were peering down from the crest of a diminutive waterfall. Below a swirling pool leered at them. But out beyond, the stream ran on and chided them for their tardiness. Capriciously did they eye each other—and then over they plunged.

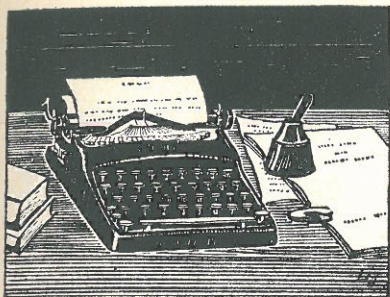
Watching them, Bucky leapt in anticipation and raced down the slope after them. Into the grove at the foot of the slope he dodged.

The happy ripples danced along with the stream in its now wiry bed and, swerving suddenly at the foot of the slope, entered the verdant grove.

As the ripples flowed through, they stirred long-silent waters in a dimple in the bank. Bucky lay nearby waiting, watching, hoping. Awakened, a fleet of cherry blossoms sailed out of their harbor. Starry-eyed, Bucky gazed after them. The great pirate fleet, cannon bristling and banner flaming, sailed out from Tripoli.



Editorial



If there is one thing that young men hate it is to be approached with an air of condescension. We dislike someone to approach us in the figurative sense of patting a small boy on the head and with ridiculous pomposity talking in some absurd manner so that the lad will understand.

The young man of today, after seeing death and horror and terror beyond description, is more than an organism that is trying to adjust itself to young manhood. He is more than a coke-drinking, jitterbugging, pleasure-seeking, fancy-dressing creature who is more interested in Sally Jones than in Iran, or more concerned with the sentimental doings of Frank Sinatra than with the dying groans of a starving people. He is a man aged beyond his years, but certainly a man aware of the future—because he made that future possible.

That is why it was with great satisfaction that we read the article by Msgr. Seroczynski, which appeared in the last issue of *Measure*. For in that article a hand was extended and a responsibility recognized.

The hand was a helping one, and the recognized responsibility was that which the older generation has to the leaders of tomorrow.

One thing that youth does not want from the older generation is sympathy. Youth can use, but in many cases does not have to have, the encouragement of his elders; for the burning ambitions and enthusiasm which are characteristic of youth will vaccinate us against average discouragement. The one thing that we must have is the ability to realize opportunities, as well as the opportunities themselves.

It is all well and good to talk about spreading Catholic ideals throughout this world, which is so badly in need of them; but if we have those ideals and not the vehicles to transmit them, then they will be of use to no one but us. And present events certainly demon-

strate that they are needed now as possibly never needed before. For example, if we are to spread our ideals throughout the secular press, then we must know the workings of that press. If we are to help cure the ills of society, then we must be able to diagnose those ills as well as offer the cure of Christianity. The plea that we would make to our educators is that they be aware of this need.

If youth would bring any one major complaint against their elders, it could be against the lethargic attitude which so permeates that generation. We have seen men die for things that they believed in, things that were not nearly so important as the Catholic way of life; and we have seen other men die for things in which they really didn't believe at all. That is why we are amazed to find a generation that cannot even live for those truths which we hold so dear.

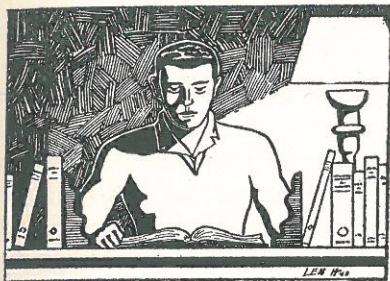
We want the opportunity to enter a life that has not been distorted by pagan ideals—ideals which are being toyed with by self-confessed Catholics as well as professed atheists—ideas like birth control and divorce.

The almost unsurmountable odds of the Godless can be overcome with truth. But the weapons of Christianity must be handed to us in working order, not broken or rusted or remade. That we feel we have a right to expect of the older generation.

Using the words of Chesterton, we hope that we will not have to convert Christians to Christianity.

—John H. Ford, '46.

Book Reviews



Brideshead Revisited—The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder, by Evelyn Waugh; Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1945. 351 pp.

JOHN BOLAN

Perhaps many, both Catholics and others, have wondered how the Catholic aristocracy of England has fared in this ultramodern age when faith and morals are so severely tried. Evelyn Waugh wondered also, but not for long; for he gives us an example of English Catholic aristocracy in the form of *Brideshead Revisited*. He invites us, in the reminiscences of Captain Charles Ryder, to study the noble Marchmain House. Immediately we recognize it as a house divided against itself, yet not falling into complete ruin.

Lord Marchmain, proud and arrogant, deserting his wife and family for no apparent reason at the end of the first World War, is most probably one of the greatest causes for the family's religious troubles. Lady Marchmain, stated as being "saintly but not a saint," strives in vain to bind the family together with the same faith. Brideshead, the oldest, and Cordelia, the youngest of the children, are exemplary Catholics and, therefore, portray a passive part in the novel. It is Sebastian and Julia, the apostates, in whom Charles Ryder is most interested in his reminiscences.

Captain Ryder places before us Sebastian, a most eccentric Oxford undergraduate, dissatisfied with his portion in life and seeking escape through alcohol and apostacy. As the figure in the "Hound of Heaven," Sebastian is fleeing from the truth while looking for it. He finally finds it in a monastery in Africa.

Julia is that type of young society debutante who thinks that everything not conforming to her wishes should be put aside. Her faith, however, is a part of her which she cannot put aside.

Charles Ryder, the agnostic, apparently wishes to understand the

Catholic faith; but he is only confused by the fickle Marchmain family.

Character study is at its best under the guiding pen of Evelyn Waugh. Every word is picked to fit in the description. We comprehend every character as the author would have us do.

The novel is undoubtedly a subtle attack against divorce and the loose morals of the English aristocracy of the present age. It displays the selfish motives for divorce; the regret felt by the divorcee is expressed in the words of Capt. Ryder, directed to his platoon commander: "I'm homeless, childless, middle-aged, loveless, Hooper."

In my opinion, the volume does not quite approach the standards of a first-class novel. There are too many characters involved. It begins with Charles Ryder as its main figure, but it deals more with the lives of his acquaintances. Brideshead is revisited and the story transmitted, but we are held in suspense at its finish. We see only a part of the lives of the characters. Perhaps that is all the author intended; nevertheless, we are left wondering what became of Brideshead, of Sebastian, and of Julia, and whether Charles Ryder ever was enlightened by the true faith. Will everything end as we would like it to? We wonder.

At times the novel becomes faintly realistic. Mr. Waugh, however, uses veiled realism; he does not depend on it to make his story what might be called a modern success or a best seller.

Undoubtedly, for those who know little about the Catholic religion, parts of the book dealing with subjects of faith and morals may, and probably will, be difficult to understand. The Catholic, however, who knows his religion will have little trouble in reading and understanding the work.

It is interesting to observe that the author's note, "I am not I; thou are not he or she; they are not they," was made apparently to discourage anyone from thinking that the novel is a reflection in any way of his life. For when reading it, one is at times inclined to think that Evelyn Waugh actually knew the characters he portrays. Indeed, he did know them, but only as creations of the mind. You will know them also, and they will occupy a place in your mind as types of their age.

Days and Nights, by Konstantine Simonov; Simon & Schuster, 1945. 421 pp.

RALPH CAPPUCCILLI

Perhaps one of the finest novels produced during World War II was the recent novel, *Days and Nights*, a simple and revealing account of the siege of Stalingrad, by one of Russia's outstanding war correspondents, Konstantine Simonov. Born in Leningrad in 1915, Simonov worked as a turner in a Russian factory from 1930 to 1935. While there he wrote poetry, which he scrawled on the wallpaper of the factory. In 1935 he matriculated at the Literary Institute of the Writers Union from which he was graduated in two years. Later, he became a war correspondent in the Far East to cover the Battle of Kholklin Gol in Outer Mongolia. Following many harrowing experiences, he found himself on June 24, 1941, covering the war front from Stalingrad to Berlin. His constant excursions throughout the Russian battlefront provided him with sufficient setting and background for his novel. Moreover, his actual experience at the battle front adequately qualified him for the task.

Konstantine Simonov has captured the fervor of battle in a most complete and understanding manner. His interpretation is not an analysis of battle strategy, nor does he endeavor to arouse the reader's sympathy by depicting human suffering in minute detail. Rather, he gives the reader a clear and sensitive picture of his own observations in a novel that speaks a universal language for all the heroes of war. Likewise, his work remains unsullied by the typical communist propaganda which is prevalent in most Russian novels. His characters, though fictitious, are human and vividly depicted. They lack no intensity of feeling. In war especially they are soldiers eager to subdue the aggressor and determined not to be reconciled until their mission is completed successfully.

The novel begins when Captain Saburov with his command is ordered to cross the Volga and afford assistance to the Russians at besieged Stalingrad, already half-encircled by the Germans. While ferrying across the Volga on barges, Saburov encounters Anya, an army nurse whom he manages to keep from drowning during a heavy barrage. Saburov is attracted to Anya immediately, but since her duties force her to different sectors of the front from time to time, he is denied her company.

After crossing the Volga, Saburov, with the help of General Babchenko, succeeds in expelling the Germans and capturing the three main buildings in Stalingrad. Consolidating themselves and establishing communications to headquarters, the Russians are stalemated by German counterattacks for seventy days and nights. Each successive attack becomes more pronounced and furious as the days elapse. However, each attack is repelled, but at the cost of many lives. Daily, scores are wounded and transferred to rear hospitals. And here, in the midst of battle, one hears no complaints of army life, but rather an acceptance of a duty that must be fulfilled in a war that must not be prolonged. In his obeisance the Russian also dreams and longs for the tranquility of home.

“Our comrades off to distant lands
With following winds from home he flies.
Blue in the haze are the town he knows
A home, a garden, a pair of loving eyes.”

During the tide of heated combat, Saburov is wounded and transferred to a rear hospital where Anya locates him. She persuades the head doctor to have Saburov taken to her mother's hut in a nearby village. There in the peaceful solitude of the countryside, Saburov recuperates rapidly with the kind attention and care of Anya. By the time he is well enough to return to Stalingrad, he finds himself deeply in love with Anya and manages to have her attached to his regiment. She is wounded in the last stages of the siege, but survives. In the meantime, Saburov and his comrades rout the Germans completely, who are losing their last offensive and are finally in full retreat.

The novel displays the versatility of its author, who gives an authentic account of the siege of Stalingrad in story form and still succeeds in obtaining a deep interest from the reader. Frequently he becomes factual, but only to refer the reader to the reality of war, which makes men conscious of an overwhelming desire for freedom and happiness. Konstantine Simonov has created a novel that will claim your attention to its very end. He has presented the Russian in an old atmosphere of war, but in a new and scintillating manner by which we may know and understand him better.

One Who Survived, by Alexander Barmine; Putman, New York, 1945. 337 pp.

LEO F. HERBER

Every man has a sense of curiosity. If you have a strong-box and a friend asks you what it contains, can you not see him ease with satisfaction if you tell him the contents? But tell him that it is a secret and you have covered your friend with a spell of anxiety.

For the entire world Russia has been such a strong-box. News of happenings inside Russia seldom reach our ears. Books dedicated to the study of Russian life—and there are few indeed—all precede the Revolution. We are the inquisitors, and now we can settle back with a certain content, for our curiosity has been satisfied. Alexander Barmine, in his recent work, *One Who Survived*, has opened the lock for us and has placed life in Soviet Russia in the public showcase of literature. In a matter-of-fact way he carries us thru all the political struggles that led up to the present Soviet government, giving the inside scenes at every turn. He portrays the rise and elimination of the great Lenin and the people's Trotski, and ends in the recent years of the reign of Joseph Stalin.

Barmine does not bring out life only as it was for others in Soviet Russia; the main purpose of his work is the portrayal of his own personal life whenever this is connected intimately with the events discussed. This connection of Barmine and the events happening in Russia is not infrequent, for we see that Lenin and Trotski did not pass thru the Shades alone. High-ranking officials of both political and military life accompanied them. Often the purge reached into the lowest circles of Russian diplomatic agents. Among both the high and the low who were sent to death or disappeared, were friends of Barmine. One by one he saw these friends recalled to Moscow; then they vanished from the scene.

If there is a reader who is looking in this volume for a masterpiece of literary style, I suggest that he never touch the book; for besides the heavy style that is native to the Russian writer, the book is filled with violations of the fundamental rules of coherence. It is for those who seek knowledge of the unknown that Mr. Barmine has written the book, and in this light must it be read.

Mr. Barmine does not penetrate deeply enough into many of the events. Some matters, important in interest, are mentioned, and only a paragraph or so dedicated to their explanation. This leaves the reader with a desire to find out more on the subject, and on most such topics there is no source of information.

We might well say that this book is written especially for Americans. We are the only nation of power that has kept a true democratic form of government. Here we can find the reasons for keeping this democracy for the future and the reasons for thanking God for preserving it in the past.

Ronsard, by D. B. Wyndham Lewis; Coward-McCann and Sheed & Ward, 1944. 334 pp.

JOHN KLOPKE

I read Mr. Lewis' book with great pleasure as the opening theme of what I hope will be a great symphony of books dealing with that forgotten period of French literature, the early Renaissance. Two chords have already been struck, both by the same author. Francios Villon, poet of the gutter, and Pierre Ronsard, poet of the palace, have both been subjects of his pen. This contrast of ideas forms the ideal expression of any work about the fourteenth century, for the background of life was that great contrast, the Renaissance.

The new dawn of learning and the popular ignorance of the use of soap, the splendor of the court and the poverty of the common people; all these are deftly sounded by the author in clear-cut phrases. In this kaleidoscopic world moves the well-proportioned (at least in later life) figure of Ronsard, acknowledged greatest poet of his age. Ronsard in love, Ronsard in war, Ronsard eating and drinking, Ronsard in all and through all.

The author gets off to a rather bad start in his opening sentence by overloading it both grammatically and rhetorically. This might produce a bad impression on one determined to read the volume through at any cost, and might well deter a mere passing interest in the volume. Once this difficulty is surmounted, the writer's sentences are keen and descriptive. His familiarity with fourteenth century history is almost contemporary. Leading political personages

of the day rise from the oblivion of dusty history books and live once more in all their freshness and vigor. Royalty and commoners, Catholics and Calvinists, all the people of those turbulent times revive for a few brief moments.

But all this is merely incidental. The central character is Pierre Ronsard. His life, from his birth in a family of doubtful nobility, through his university days, to his rise to fame as court poet, is told as mirrored in his works. Ronsard, a semi-pagan, by some queer twist of fate became the target of the Calvinists who saw in him the picture of the decadent clergy of the day. Thus he was forced to defend himself as a Catholic in a series of masterful poems. These, combined with his love poems, form the backbone of the author's masterful treatment of his life.

Mr. Lewis' style has at times a tendency towards the mere bombastic, a toying with words for effect. This makes a very interesting diversion from the ordinary prose of biographers, since we all enjoy a little decoration. A sort of fancy frame around the picture of Ronsard, we might call it. One serious objection, however, is raised against its use in certain sections of the book, for it tends to obscure the moral questions that arise. Whether or not the author winks at Ronsard's peccadilloes and excuses them on the ground that they produced good poetry, is hard to tell.

As one finishes the book with the death of a reconciled and penitent Ronsard, composing two of his finest sonnets in his last hour, one feels that the author has succeeded in making his character live, which is after all the purpose of every biographer. Mr. Lewis aims to leave us with an idea, an impression of the character of Ronsard. In this he has succeeded well.

Ourselves, Inc., by Leo Ward; Harper and Brothers, New York and London, 1945. 236 pp.

PAUL SCHENK

Ourselves, Inc. is just what the title implies—we, the people in business. A story of cooperatives and more, it is the ethics of cooperatives.

Father Ward has been attracted by the true value of co-ops. He has delved into the origins and the progress of many such associations throughout the North-Central states. He sees what they are doing for the people and looks to the people for information. How was the idea introduced into the community? How did the organization commence? Did it get on its feet immediately?

Here is the story of the miner, faithful to the co-op enterprise, to the enterprise that saved him from ruin. An old man now, he relates a tale satiated with those battles most people must face.

He tells how the cooperative was formed, of the barriers it had to meet, of its slow progress and its great success. Here is the episode of the dairymen who form a cooperative to insure themselves of a fair price for their product. The salesman in the co-op store, working for the people, relates many of his experiences. A doctor argues for co-op medicine, and Father Ward has his fun playing up to a few profit-hungry gentlemen.

A true appreciation, written, not in a formal, factual manner, but in familiar tones that are pleasant to the reader—that is Father Ward's *Ourselves, Inc.*

And for those who do not know what cooperatives are, here is the place to make a worth-while discovery. For those who are acquainted with this organization, here is the book that will explain why cooperatives are what they are.